

Department of Corrections Private Prisons

July 2001

The Department of Corrections (DOC) currently has contracts with two vendors to house state prisoners in private prisons in Florence, Marana, and Phoenix. These prisons house over 1,300 inmates, most of whom were convicted of DUI or drug-related offenses.

Our Conclusions:

The Department's extensive oversight appears to ensure the program's success. Because of the potential for expanding the program in the future to other inmate groups, such as women and older inmates, DOC should begin gathering cost data. The report also provides information on three private prisons in Arizona that the Department does not oversee.

The Department Exercises Strong Oversight

When it comes to contracting with private prisons, the Department runs one of the "tightest ships" in the country. The Department requires private prisons to follow the same orders, instructions, and manuals as the state-operated prisons.

To ensure compliance, the Department closely monitors the prisons through:

- Stationing an associate deputy warden, lieutenant, and classification specialist at each prison;
- Annual audits and inspections;
- Biennially comparing services against state services; and
- Five-year cost comparisons.

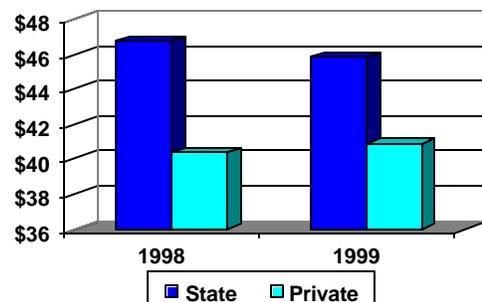
In addition, the costs of the private prisons are 12 percent lower than state-operated prisons.

Photo 1: Front view of Florence private prison



In two years, the Department saved \$5.5 million using private prisons.

Daily Costs Per Inmate



The Department Should Gather Data on Potential Private Prison Inmate Groups

Other inmate groups besides DUI and drug-related offenders may be good candidates for future privatization. These groups include:

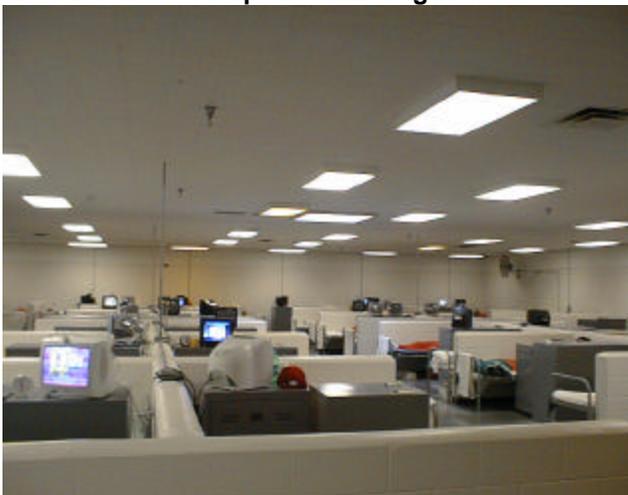
- Women;
- Geriatric (inmates over 50 years old);
- Mentally ill; and
- Sex offenders.

Before the Department decides to privatize any of these groups, it needs to show that it can:

- Reduce costs, or
- Obtain better service.

The Department currently lacks reliable cost information in areas such as health care costs for female inmates.

Photo 2: Private prison housing



Dormitory-style housing at a private prison specifically designed for substance abuse treatment.

The Department should:

- ✓ Begin gathering cost data on other inmate groups that could be housed in private prisons.

Other Private Prisons in Arizona

The Department has no jurisdiction over three other private prisons operating in Eloy and Florence. Almost 4,800 inmates are in custody for:

Federal agencies—3,268
Alaska—794
Hawaii—540
District of Columbia—139
Pascua Yaqui Tribe—34

These inmates include all security levels, including maximum.

To Obtain More Information

- A copy of the full report can be obtained by calling (602) 553-0333 or by visiting our Web site at:

www.auditorgen.state.az.us

- The contact person for this report is **Shan Hays**.